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ABSTRACT

Major changes are involved in the teaching/learning process in career education and the classroom teacher is of key importance. Emphasis must be placed on: (1) the rationale for career education in the classroom; (2) the use of career implications of subject matter as motivational devices; (3) implications of expanding the parameters of the teaching/learning process; and (4) implications of career education for the philosophy of teaching. To successfully prepare students for future careers, the two major objectives are: (1) to increase relationships between education and work and the ability of individuals to understand and capitalize on these relationships; and (2) to increase the personal meaning and meaningfulness of work in the total lifestyle of each individual. Both of these objectives call for the integration of the classroom and the community and for the development of educational strategies for reducing student alienation. Career education urges student accomplishment and brings relevance to the classroom experience. The working relationship between the teacher, student and resource persons who supplement the classroom material are of utmost importance. The development of the students' self-concepts and the teacher's interest in students' career aspirations are vital for effective teaching. (Author/JB)

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CAREER EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS

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Introduction

Almost from its inception, career education has been pictured as a collaborative effort involving the formal educational system, the home and family structure, and the business-labor-industry-professional-government community. As it has been conceptualized, important roles and functions have been suggested for personnel from each of these three segments of society. Repeatedly, we have emphasized that, unlike earlier moves toward educational reform, career education is not something that school personnel can do by themselves. Within our system of formal education, we have suggested that all educational personnel need to be active participants if career education is to be effective. We have stressed, as strongly as possible, our belief that career education does not represent a function to be assigned to a single individual in the school nor relegated to any particular part of the curriculum.

Career education's cry for collaboration has camouflaged the crucial importance of the classroom teacher to the success of career education. Equally important, it has tended to also camouflage the many and varied implications for change in the teaching/learning process called for by career education. Of all those we ask to become involved in career education, the greatest potential for effectiveness and the

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greatest challenges for change lie in the teaching/learning process. It is my purpose here to attempt to both defend and explain this contention.

Both the need for and the current status of career education have been discussed repeatedly in the references found at the end of this paper. Both of these topics are, therefore, purposely ignored here. Instead, I would like here to specify the major kinds of changes called for in the teaching/learning process and the key importance of the classroom teacher in effecting such changes. To do so, four topics must each be briefly discussed: (1) The rationale for career education in the classroom; (2) The use of career implications of subject matter as motivational devices; (3) Implications of expanding the parameters of the teaching/learning process; and (4) Implications of career education for the philosophy of teaching.

Before proceeding, two points must be made clear. First, there are many in career education who do not agree with my contention that the classroom teacher is the key person in career education. Second, my thoughts on this topic are still evolving and I will welcome your criticisms and suggestions. Having made these two admissions, let us proceed.

A Rationale For Career Education in the Classroom

Career education seeks to make education, as preparation for work, a major goal of all who teach and of all who learn. To attain this goal, career education has formulated two broad objectives:

(1) to increase relationships between education and work and the ability of individuals to understand and capitalize on these relationships; and (2) to increase the personal meaning and meaningfulness of work in the total lifestyle of each individual. Both of these objectives deserve brief discussion.

Relationships between education and work are, as we all know, becoming closer and closer as we move into the post-industrial-service-information-technological society of today and the foreseeable future. Demand for unskilled labor continues to decline. Demand for persons with specific learned occupational skills continues to increase. The American system of formal education must accept increasing responsibility both for providing individuals with general career skills required for adaptability in our rapidly changing society and with specific career skills that can be utilized in making the transition from school to the world of paid employment. Our students will be unable to take full advantage of these relationships between education and work until and unless they know about them. They will not learn about them if teachers continue to ignore the topic. In essence, this is the rationale behind career education's efforts to attain this first objective.

The second objective - i.e., making work a more meaningful part of the individual's total lifestyle - is considerably more basic to career education's call for change within the classroom. A full discussion of this objective would extend far beyond the classroom and

the teaching/learning process. Here, only that part of the rationale that pertains to the classroom itself will be discussed.

In career education, the word "work" is not limited to the world of paid employment outside of formal education. On the contrary, "work" is defined as "conscious effort, other than that whose primary purpose is either coping or relaxation, aimed at producing benefits for oneself and/or for oneself and others." Thus, in addition to the world of paid employment, this definition covers the unpaid work of the volunteer, the full-time homemaker, and work in which individuals engage in the productive use of their leisure time. For our purposes here, the prime point I want to emphasize is that it also includes the work of the student and the work of the teacher. In the conceptualization of career education, every full-time student has a vocation - e.g., a primary work role - namely, the "vocation" of student. Similarly, every teacher has an occupation - e.g., a primary work role in the world of paid employment - namely, the "occupation" of teacher. We begin with an assumption that both teachers and students supposedly come into the classroom to work. (The fact that, in many classrooms, one would have difficulty seeing this assumption being applied makes it no less valid as an assumption.)

In the larger society, positive relationships have been established between productivity (output per person hour) and reduction in worker alienation. There is every reason to believe that these same kinds of positive relationships can and do exist for the work of the student

and for the work of the teacher in the classroom. If worker alienation can be reduced among both students and teachers, educational productivity - i.e., increases in academic achievement - should result. Evidence justifying this reasoning has already been accumulated in career education programs operating in such widely diverse places as Hamlin County, West Virginia; Dade County, Florida; Santa Barbara, California; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

It is no secret that, today, we have many students who are alienated from their work. They don't like to learn in the classrooms they are in. When this happens, we often find teachers who are alienated from their work. They don't enjoy teaching. By applying the general principles used in reducing worker alienation to both students and teachers, it seems reasonable to assume that educational productivity will increase.

Common strategies for reducing worker alienation include such strategies as: (a) increasing the variety of work assignments; (b) increasing autonomy of the individual worker; (b) providing workers with perspective regarding the importance of their work; (e) providing workers with more opportunity for closer personal interaction; (f) providing workers rewards for quality work completed on an "on-time" basis; and (g) encouraging workers to use their own creativity and ingenuity in devising ways of attaining desired outcomes. It should be immediately apparent, to those who have studied the literature of career education, that many of the classroom strategies and methods

proposed by career education are directly aimed at reducing worker alienation among both students and among teachers.

In career education, we are trying to get away from the educational "assembly line" that finds persons going to school simply so that they can go on to more schooling. We are trying to free both teachers and students to be as innovative and as creative as we believe they really are. We want both students and teachers to gain personal meaning and meaningfulness from their work. We do so in order that student achievement can be increased.

The Use of Career Implications of Subject Matter as Motivational Devices

In my opinion, an "instructor" is one who imparts subject matter to students. On the other hand, a "teacher is one who, in addition to a concern for imparting subject matter, is also concerned with helping students understand reasons why it is important to learn the subject matter. Career education emphasizes education as preparation for work. In doing so, we have contended that one of the reasons students go to school is so they can engage in work after leaving the formal educational system. If teachers can show students how the subject matter relates to work that the student may some day choose to do, we have assumed that students may be motivated to learn more subject matter. The career implications of subject matter represent a source of educational motivation that should apply to all of the students some of the time. It may apply to some of the students almost all of the time. If "career" is defined as "the totality of work one does in her or his lifetime" and, if "work" includes unpaid activities

as well as the world of paid employment, it would seem that career implications exist for every subject. For almost all subjects, career implications exist pertaining to the world of paid employment. In others, the majority of career implications pertain to the work individuals may choose to do in the productive use of leisure time. It is important and appropriate that both kinds of career implications be made clear to students.

Two additional observations are equally important to emphasize here. First, education, as preparation for work, represents only one among several basic and fundamental goals of American Education. Thus, the use of career implications of subject matter as a source of educational motivation should be thought of as only one of a variety of ways in which teachers seek to help students find a sense of purpose and purposefulness in learning subject matter. Second, and related to the first, the presence of multiple goals for American Education make it obvious that, when one considers all that is taught in classrooms, large segments are taught for purposes of attaining other worthy goals of Americal Education and so have no direct career implications whatsoever.

I am always distressed when, in effect, a teacher apologizes to me for not stressing career implications of subject matter while I am observing a class. Sometimes there are none. The worst thing we could do is to attempt to fabricate career implications. All we have ever said to teachers is to try to emphasize career implications, where they exist, as one source of educational motivation. We are

not trying to take time away from imparting subject matter. Rather, we are simply asking teachers to consider using career implications of subject matter, where appropriate, during that time any person who deserves to be called a "teacher" takes to show students why it is important to learn the subject matter.

Implications of Expanding the Parameters of the Teacher/Learning Process

Career education exponents have proclaimed widely their belief that students can learn in more ways than from books, in more settings than the formal classroom, and from more persons than the certified professional teacher. Such pronouncements seem to have startled and upset some teachers. This is most unfortunate. Rather than being, in any way, a threat to the teacher, these pronouncements are intended as ways of expanding the parameters of the teaching/learning process and so to increase the variety of options open to the teacher along with opportunities for the exercise of teacher innovativeness and creativity. No one, so far as I know, is talking about replacing either teachers or classrooms. I think we know better than to try that.

We are saying that it is time we rid ourselves of the false assumption that the best way to ready students for the real world is to lock them up in a classroom and keep them away from that world. We are saying that many learning opportunities exist in the broader community outside of the classroom and that, if we make provisions for our students to learn in that broader community as well as in the classroom, perhaps our students would learn more. We are saying that there are

persons in every community who, instead of going through the "school of hard books," went through the "school of hard knocks" and that some of what they learned may be valuable for some of our students. We are saying that the use of resource persons in the classroom can supplement efforts of the professional teacher who will also be in that classroom. We are saying that many instructional materials exist on the broader community that can and should be brought into the classroom and used.

Most important, it seems to me we are saying that our prime concern should center around how much students learn - not on where they learn it, how they learn it, or from whom they learn it. The teacher who uses expansion of student opportunities for learning what the teacher is charged with teaching as a prime criterion for planning the total teaching/learning process will almost surely find that more than the teacher, the student, and the book are involved. One of career education's basic tenets is that the days of education isolationism are past. I would hope we could all understand, accept, and act on that fact.

Implications of Career Education for the Philosophy of Teaching

Finally, I would like to comment briefly on what seem to me to be implications of career education for the philosophy of teaching. Of all I have said here, this topic is bound to raise the most controversy and the most disagreement. Because it seems so important to me, I feel I must try to communicate some of my thinking on this topic to you.

First, I believe career education urges the teacher to emphasize accomplishment - productivity - outcomes for all students. Factors making for productivity have been known for years. They are, in general, referred to as good work habits. They include encouraging each student to try, to do the best she or he can, to finish assignments, to cooperate with others, and to come to the work setting (the classroom) on time. I am one who believes the time has come to re-emphasize the practice of good work habits in the classroom and to reward those students who learn and practice them. If, beginning in the early elementary school, all students could be encouraged to learn and practice good work habits, I firmly believe that fewer complaints would be heard from employers who hire these students after they leave us. I also believe that the practice of good work habits would enhance educational achievement. I think they should be taught consciously, conscientiously, and proudly.

Second, I believe every student has a right to know why it is important to learn that which the teacher tries to teach. If career implications of such subject matter are not present or not valued, then I believe the teacher has a responsibility for providing other reasons for learning to students. In short, I firmly believe that the purpose of education must extend beyond education itself - that education must be preparation for <u>something</u> - for one or more of the life roles the student will play as an adult.

Third, I believe that the teaching/learning process would be more

effective if we emphasized success, rather than failure, to our students. That is, I believe that we have spent far too much time urging our students to do better without giving them sufficient credit for what they have already done. We have all seen little children beginning school as active learners and completely "turned off" from all attempts to learn prior to reaching the fourth grade. I have a sincere feeling that, in part, this must be caused for many students by teachers who tell them how they failed, what they did wrong, and how other students did better. Career education seeks to help every student understand that he or she is someone because they have done something. The fact that other students have done more or better, while not unimportant, is irrelevant to the fact that this student has accomplished - has worked. I think students would work harder in the future if we give them credit for the work they have already done.

Finally, I believe that every teacher should be interested in and express interest in career aspirations of students. Years ago, we used to say that "every teacher is a counselor." That phrase tended to disappear from popularity when NDEA brought a rapid increase in professional counselors into our schools. I think it is time that phrase be revived. I think teachers should be concerned about and involved in helping students answer the question "Why should I work?" This, of course, is a matter of work values and these will be highly influenced by the culture of the home and family structure of the student. That is why I believe teachers should make conscious

efforts to relate more closely and more often with members of the student's family. Problems of both race and sex stereotyping are currently preventing many minority students and many females from considering, let alone choosing, from among the broad range of career options that should be made available to them. Many of these stereotypes are reinforced in the textbooks teachers use in the classroom. If teachers do not take an active interest in solving this problem, I do not believe it will ever be solved.

Concluding Remarks

The emphasis here has, hopefully, been limited to the topic of career education and the teaching/learning process. By so limiting my remarks, I have failed to consider a variety of other topics that I know are of interest to members of ASCD - including such matters as the year-round school, the open-entry open-exit educational system, performance evaluation dangers of the Carnegie unit, the elimination of tracking in the senior high school, or implications that USOE's 15 occupational clusters hold for curriculum change.

Instead, I have chosen to concentrate on the teacher, the student, and the teaching/learning process. I did so because, in my opinion, unless career education is understood and implemented by classroom teachers, anything else we do in the name of career education will matter very little.

Other USOE Papers on Career Education

1. An Introduction to Career Education: An Official Policy Statement of the United States Office of Education

2. Career Education: A Crusade for Change

3. Career Education and Teacher Education

4. The Linkage of Education with the World of Work and Career Development

5. Career Education: Challenges for Counselors

6 Career Education and the Handicapped Person

7. Career Education for Minority and Low-Income Students

8. Career Education, Vocational Education, and Occupational Education: An Approach to Defining Differences

9. Career Guidance, Career Education, and Vocational Education

10. Business Office Occupations and Distributive Education: Keys to Career Education